

Payphone Relay Service

FCC Consumer Facts

Background

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) providers to be able to handle all calls normally carried by telephone companies, including "coin sent-paid" calls (calls made from a coin-operated public payphone). A plan is in place that can help you, and others, make a relay call from a pay telephone. The plan was developed by local and long distance telephone companies, TRS providers, independent payphone service providers, and organizations representing persons with hearing and speech disabilities.

The Relay and Payphone Plan

This plan covers local and long distance calls. You may make local and long distance calls from any coin-operated public pay phone through TRS. If a call is local, you do not need to use coins, a calling card, or a prepaid card. Just dial 711 on most payphones and give the local number you wish to call. You can make long distance calls by charging them to your calling card, including a prepaid card, or by calling collect. Charges for calling cards may vary, so check with your provider about applicable rates. More information on prepaid phone cards is available on the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) Web site at www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/prepaidcards.html.

TRS and How It Works

TRS is a service that enables persons with hearing or speech disabilities to communicate by telephone with persons who do not have such disabilities. This communication is accomplished through TRS centers using trained communications assistants (CAs), who relay conversations using either text, voice, or video devices.

TRS and How It Works (cont'd.)

TRS is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at no extra cost to callers. Your local relay service can be accessed by dialing 711, a toll free relay service number, or the TRS center's seven digit number that can be found in the Customer Guide pages of your local telephone directory.

For more information about the various types of TRS, see our consumer fact sheet at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/trs.html> or visit our disability Web site at www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/.

Getting a Telephone Calling Card or Prepaid Card

If you want information about obtaining a telephone calling card or prepaid card, call your TRS provider, the business office of your local telephone company, your long distance carrier, or, if available, a center for individuals with special needs. The TTY and voice numbers for these offices or services can be found in the Customer Guide pages of your local telephone directory. Prepaid cards are also available at convenience stores, gas stations, grocery stores, newsstands, and other public places.

(More)



Getting a Telephone Calling Card or Prepaid Card (cont'd.)

The FCC does not regulate prepaid cards or the rates for using them, so check with the provider and shop around for the best prices.

Need More Information?

For more information about TRS, see our TRS consumer fact sheet at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/trs.html>, or visit our disability Web site at www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/. If you have questions, need assistance on other disability issues, or if you would like to receive free information about disability issues on a regular basis via e-mail, contact the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at fccinfo@fcc.gov.

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To receive information on this and other FCC consumer topics through the Commission's electronic subscriber service, click on <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/>.

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